

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Plaintiff,

ORDER

-against-

18 MAG 2959 (UA)

TENZIN NORBU

Defendant.

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JENNIFER E. WILLIS, United States Magistrate Judge:

For the reasons stated more fully on the record, the Court finds that there are conditions that would reasonably assure Mr. Norbu's appearance at future court appearances.

The government sought detention on risk of flight only. The primary arguments in favor of detention were the allegations in the complaint that Mr. Norbu has the demonstrated skill to create fraudulent identification documents as well as his apparent flight to Canada in 2018. The government indicated that they have a witness who reports Mr. Norbu was aware of the investigation against him in 2018 and he fled to Canada as a result. The government cited to his failure to use an official port of entry into Canada as evidence of his flight.

Defense in contrast argued that Mr. Norbu's move to Canada was an attempt to find more favorable immigration status after the United States denied his asylum petition (he was later granted asylum in Canada).

The Court does find the method of Mr. Norbu's journey to Canada as well as the timing concerning and weighs that as an indication of flight risk in the future. However, the Court also considers Mr. Norbu's conduct while in Canada facing extradition. He was evidently released on conditions in Canada and remained at liberty for several years while extradition proceedings took place. During that time he was compliant with conditions and appeared at any required hearings. He ultimately self-surrendered to authorities in order to be returned to the United States after he lost extradition. This conduct demonstrates that Mr. Norbu is capable of following conditions of release and demonstrates that whatever his motives in initially going to Canada, he is now willing to appear in court to answer for these charges.

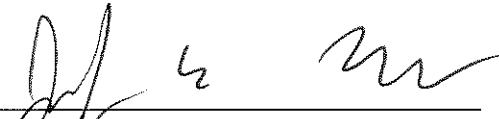
Additionally, the defense's proposed package included eight close friends of Mr. Norbu. As an exile from Tibet, Mr. Norbu cannot return and has not seen his blood

relatives in decades. Instead, he has a circle of close friends, also members of the Tibetan community in New York. One of the proposed co-signers first met Mr. Norbu at a school for Tibetan children in India over forty years ago. Other potential co-signers have known him for ten to twenty years. He sees them all frequently and plans to live with one cosigner upon release. All potential co-signers were in court, with the exception of one who was unable to attend but submitted a detailed letter about the nature of his relationship with Mr. Norbu. **See Attachment A.** The Court believes that the duration and quality of these relationships is sufficient to hold sway over Mr. Norbu.

For the aforementioned reasons, the Court set the conditions of bail contained in the attached disposition sheet.

SO ORDERED.

DATED: New York, New York
March 5, 2024



JENNIFER E. WILLIS
United States Magistrate Judge



BARRE CENTER for
BUDDHIST STUDIES

March 2, 2024

To the Honorable Magistrate Judge Jennifer E. Willis,

My name is William Edelglass. I serve as Director of Studies at the Barre Center for Buddhist Studies and am Associate Professor of Philosophy at Emerson College in Boston. Today I am writing in support of Tenzin Norbu who is appearing before you for a bail hearing.

One of my primary areas of research is Indian and Tibetan Buddhist philosophy (my most recent book, from 2022, is the Routledge Handbook of Indian Buddhist Philosophy). My interest in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist thought led me to live, study, and teach in Dharamsala, India starting in October 2000 and, with some periods back home in the United States, until Spring 2003. During my time in Dharamsala I became friends with Tenzin Norbu.

Tenzin was studying Buddhist philosophy at the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics (IBD), in Dharamsala, India, where I studied Tibetan, and also, eventually, taught several courses in Western philosophy to Tibetan monks. The Institute of Buddhist Dialectics is one of the leading Tibetan scholarly institutions anywhere. Tenzin was a student in some of the classes I was teaching.

At the time I was also teaching for Emory University's Tibetan Studies semester-long study abroad program, which was based in Dharamsala and affiliated with the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics. Because Tenzin had received a traditional monastic education and had a deep training in Buddhist philosophy and also had excellent English and a special gift for connecting with teachers and students, we hired Tenzin as a translator for the study abroad program. In addition to his translation work, Tenzin helped us innumerable ways to understand local community dynamics and also, with his immense knowledge of Buddhist thought and Tibetan culture, he was an able guide to the world we were exploring with our students.

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BARRE CENTER *for*
BUDDHIST STUDIES

Because of Tenzin Norbu's work for the Emory Tibetan Studies Program, he accompanied us on many of our field trips. Here, for example, is a group picture from the 2001 semester, with a prominent Tibetan monk. Tenzin Norbu is on the far left in the first standing row, wearing a blue shirt; I am sitting in the front row, second from the right.



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Below is another photograph of Tenzin Norbu from his work with us, this time translating for Ani Pachen, a famous Tibetan political prisoner, speaking to our students. (Here is a [link](#) to Ani Pachen's obituary in the *New York Times*, written by Douglas Martin, from the February 18th, 2002 edition, section B, page 7. If you read that *New York Times* obituary you will see that I am quoted.)



Tenzin Norbu translating for the Emory University Tibetan Studies in Dharamsala Program, for Tibetan political prisoner and freedom fighter, Ani Pachen, 2001.

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Because Tenzin Norbu and I had become quite close, and because as someone who had escaped from Tibet as a very young boy and was unable to return to see his family, when I was in Tibetan I wanted to meet his family. So, in June 2001 I visited his family in his home region in Tingri County not too far from the border between China and Nepal. By then, Tenzin Norbu's parents had both died. But he had given us the name of his sister, and we put the word out that we were looking for her and that we were friends with Tenzin Norbu. His home village where they lived was about 40 minutes by horse from the main road and his older sister, Dolma Kyi, his aunt—also Dolma—and his cousin came and met us. Below is a picture that my travel companion, Leigh Miller, took of Tenzin Norbu's sister, aunt, and cousin when we visited them near his family home.



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I hope it is clear from what I have written and the photographs that I shared here that I have known Tenzin Norbu for more than two decades. I have consistently found Tenzin to be reliable, trustworthy, kind, and generous. My wife, who also has known Tenzin Norbu since 2001, and I have invited Tenzin to live with us and our children at our home while awaiting trial because we have such trust in him.

I was hoping to be able to come to the bail hearing to support Tenzin. Because my step-father is close to death and I am flying early Tuesday morning to say goodbye to him, I will be unable to attend the hearing. However, I would be very happy to speak with you if I can be of any help.

My email is williame@buddhistinquiry.org and my phone is (802) 579-8601.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

William Edelglass

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